

Americans Adopting in Georgia Encountering Delays

October 3, 2002

Russian Transit Visas:

Due to increased tensions between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Georgia, the Russian Embassy in Tblisi has instituted new policies that have slowed the issuance of transit visas to Georgian orphans adopted by U.S. citizens. (Please note that all U.S. immigrant visas for Georgian citizens, including adopted orphans, are processed at the U.S. in Moscow. Thus, the adopted children must have the appropriate documentation, in this case a transit visa, in order to travel to Russia.) The Russian Embassy now requires that all documents submitted with the visa application be authenticated. Authentication of Georgian documents typically takes five days. In addition, the Russian Embassy has instituted a five-day processing period for transit visa applications. American citizens should expect to spend at least an additional ten days in Georgia to complete their adoptions and to obtain the required transit visas for their adopted children.

Georgian Entry Visas:

It has been common practice for many Americans adopting in Georgia to obtain entry visas upon arrival at the airport in Tblisi. These visas have a validity of two weeks, which is insufficient time to complete the adoption process and obtain the necessary transit visa for the adopted child, in light of the new Russian requirements. U.S. citizens attempting to depart Georgia with expired visas will encounter additional difficulties and delays. U.S. citizens should renew their airport visas before the expiration date or obtain full validity visitors visas from the Georgian Embassy in Washington before traveling to Georgia. An application for a Georgian visa may be downloaded from the Republic of Georgia Embassy at <http://www.georgiaemb.org>. Please look under "Consular Affairs."

The U.S. Embassy in Tblisi continues to monitor the situation and to discuss with both the Russian Embassy and the Georgian government ways to ameliorate it. New information will be published on this Web site as it develops. Given the possibility of increased tensions in the region, Americans planning to travel to Georgia should check the State Department's travel advisories and Country Information Sheets before commencing travel. Go to http://travel.state.gov/travel_warnings.html